

# THE DEAD SEA AND THE JORDAN

FRANK G. CARPENTER WRITES OF MIGHTY TRENCH WHICH FORMS THE WORLD'S CELLAR.

Graphic Description of the River From Its Source to Its Mouth—In the Mountains of Lebanon and Between the Seas of Life and Death—The Immense Fall and the Electric Possibilities—Where John Baptized and How the Pilgrims Are There Handled Today—They Enter the Water in Shrouds—Swimming in Dead Sea—On the Site of Sodom and Gomorrah—Mme. Lot Licked Up by Camels.

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JERICHO, Dec. 6.—The Jordan! How shall I make you see it as it winds its way through this great gash in the thirsty face of old Mother Earth? All day long I have been traveling upon its banks in this, the lower part of the course. I have visited the ford where Joshua crossed with his army of Jews when he took possession of Canaan, have stood on the spot where it is said that Jesus was baptized of John, and have gone over the place where the waters were parted by the cloak of Elijah. Here at Jericho I am within a short gallop of the Dead sea, into which the Jordan flows, and sitting on the steps of my hotel I can see Mount Nebo, where Moses stood when he viewed the Promised Land, which he was not to enter. In former times I have seen the Jordan, near the Sea of Galilee, and have been not far from its source in the Lebanon mountains.

**In the Cellar of the Earth.**  
This Jordan valley is the cellar of the world. It is a great trench, which begins a thousand or more feet above the sea, in the Lebanon mountains, and within a distance of 160 miles as the crow flies sinks its way down to 1300 feet below sea level, where it ends in the Dead sea. The bottom of that sea is a half mile below the surface of the Mediterranean, and in Jericho, where I am writing, we are almost 600 feet below the highest point in Jerusalem. There is no other part of the earth uncovered by water where the land for any distance is sunken for even 200 feet below the level of the ocean. This is the greatest trough of the world, and one of the strangest.

Typical of heaven, the Valley of the Jordan is emblematic of hell. The most of it is as thirsty as the dry sand of the Sahara, and just now its heat is as torrid as Tophet. The plain over which I rode today on my way to the river was covered with thorn bushes. The only green after leaving the irrigated farms about Jericho was that which borders the gulch through which the Jordan runs, the remainder being of alkaline earth thrown up by the floods in castles and mounds, making gullies and hills of all sizes and shapes. The mean temperature of Jerusalem is 64 Fahrenheit. It is temperate throughout and the snow falls there in the winter. The heat here is as great as that of the center of Nubia. Dates can be grown, and in the past Jericho was known as the city of palms.

**A Bird's-Eye View of the Jordan.**  
But this is not the character of the whole course of the Jordan. Let me give you a bird's-eye view of the river, or, better, let us suppose we have taken an aeroplane and are going from its source in the Lebanon mountains to where it loses itself in the great sea of salt below. It rises on the foot of Mount Hermon, whose peak is cov-

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**Blood Poison**

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we can drive there in a carriage. As we start, the great white, blinding sun is climbing the blue above Mount Nebo, and the faint streak of the Dead Sea, with the haze that hangs always over it, can be seen down the valley. Our soldier gallops in front to scare off the Bedouins and we wind our way lazily in and out through the wheat fields. Leaving these we enter a desert on the edge of which stands Gilgal, where the Israelites first encamped after crossing the Jordan, and then go on through the thorny scrub among gullies and hills until we approach the long fringes of thickets which border the river. There is more vegetation as we near this and we go through the bushes until we come to a creek which is no wider than the average street of an American city. It looks like many of the small streams of our central states. I know of such in Indiana, Illinois and Ohio, and there is one of just about the same size which goes by the name of Goose creek in Loudoun county, Va. The Rhine and the Hudson, the Potomac, or even the Shenandoah, could swallow the Jordan without bulging and just now it is so small that in the United States it would not be known as a river.

Nevertheless, the current is swift at this place and we hire a fisherman to take us across. He charges 25 cents for the boat, and for this row us up and down stream for an hour. He stands up as he rows and leans on the oars. We go to the other side of the Jordan and climb out through the willows. How quiet it is! The only sound is the ripple of the stream as it washes the banks and the sweet-scented birds which sing in the trees at our left. As we return we lean over and bathe our hands in the Jordan. The water is cold. It looks like weak milk when taken up in a bottle. We taste it. It is acrid and salty and we spit it out in disgust.

**Baptizing the Pilgrims.**  
It is at this spot that John is said to have been baptized of John in the Jordan. The place is about three miles from the Dead Sea, where the water at ordinary times is four or five feet deep. It is the principal place of pilgrims to the Jordan, and is the scene of tens of thousands of baptisms a year. The chief time for baptizing is Easter, when the Russians come by the thousands and when other members of the Greek church unite with them in a great caravan which comes here and camps.

At that time the water is blessed by the high priest of the church, and there are many priests here to baptize the faithful. The women and men dress in white garments and go into the water together. They change their clothes on the shore. The garments they wear in the water are usually shrouds, which they have brought from home with them for this purpose, and which they intend to take back to be used at their burials.

The scenes of these baptisms make one think of a picnic. The men, women and children rush about, some laughing and screaming, and others quietly talking. The priests dip each three times in the Jordan and give him their blessing. After baptism some seek other things that they may carry them home to their friends. They also drink of the dirty water and bottle it up to take home. Some of the pilgrims are old and have to be lifted in and out of the river. The current is swift and men are frequently drowned.

**The Dead Sea.**  
Leaving the Jordan, we make our way down the valley to the Dead Sea. The road goes through the thorn bushes and winds about through dry, thirsty hills. The land is salty and alkaline and all nature is dead. How hot the sun is, and how glaring! Our eyes smart and horrid flies crawl with legs of glue over our faces. We try to brush them off, but they alight again, and bite as they crawl.

Now we are on the shore of the sea. It is covered with pebbles and drifts. It looks more like a lake than a sea, and it is just about the size of Lake Geneva, in Switzerland. It is only 50 miles long and 10 miles in width, and we can see from one end of it to the other.

The sea is bounded by stony mountains. On the east are the desert hills of Moab, where Ruth was born and Moses is buried, and on the west lie those of Judah, where the children of Israel came after Moses had pointed out the Promised Land to them. There are openings at the north and south, and away at the southwest are works where the Turkish government is evaporating the water to make salt for sale. The Dead Sea has no outlet. A mist usually hangs over it, which comes from the evaporation, which is enormous. It is estimated that over 6,000,000 tons of water flow into it daily, and nevertheless its level changes only a little throughout the year, and that at the times of the flood.

**One-Fourth Salt.**  
Now dip up some of the water in your hand and taste it. It burns your tongue and your lips. It is as bitter as gall, and if you drank a glass of it you would probably die. It is about

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Some people who read our ads the past two weeks in which we stated that we would cure Varicocele, Stricture and Piles for the small sum of Fifteen Dollars, were very skeptical. The following letters taken from many we have received, tell what we are doing:

City, May 23, 1910.  
Dear Doctors:—It is with pleasure that I write you that the little operation was a perfect success. When I read your advertisement stating that you would cure varicocele for fifteen dollars, I said to myself, well I will go up and see where the catch in this ad is, as I had some experience with advertising doctors, and the other kind, too, for that matter. You did all you promised and I am truly grateful. Would prefer that you not use my name in the papers, but will talk with anyone. Your Grateful Patient, El Paso, May 23rd.

Dear Doctors:—I believe that my stricture is well. I feel fine, in fact better than for years. Your charges were less than one-fourth I paid another specialist who treated me for months without giving me relief. Yours gratefully,



## Suggestive Questions On Sunday School Lesson By Rev. Dr. Linscott For the International Newspaper Bible Study Club

(Copyright 1910, by Rev. T. S. Linscott, D. D.)

Lesson for December 25, 1910.

Christmas Lesson, Luke 11:2-9.

Golden Text.—For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 11:1.

(1.) Verses 5-7.—What country and what city was Jesus born in?

(2.) Why was Bethlehem called the city of David? See I Sam. xvi:1.

(3.) What circumstances had brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem?

(4.) Why was it fitting that Jesus should be born in Bethlehem?

(5.) In what direction and how far is Bethlehem from Nazareth? Also from Jerusalem?

(6.) How much did God have to do with this visit of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem at this particular time?

(7.) Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem at the command of Caesar Augustus. Joseph, the son of Jacob, was dragged into Egypt as a slave, but the results in each case were most blessed; now how can you show that these and other similar cases, demonstrate that God uses bad men and calamities, as well as good men and fortunate events, to help every devout man to his glorious destiny?

(8.) What was the birth of Christ meant to the world?

(9.) What significance is there to the poor, and to the tolling masses, that Jesus was born in a stable, and cradled in a manger?

(10.) Verses 8-10.—These shepherds received a great revelation while looking after their sheep; when do good men get most of their revelation, or inspirations: while they are praying for them or when faithfully engaged in their usual occupations?

(11.) Why were these shepherds so much afraid?

(12.) Is it usual for people to be afraid when God visits them? Why?

(13.) Are all God's messages to good people, "good tidings of great joy"? Give your reasons.

(14.) With what kind of voice did this angel speak, would it be outward and audible, so any person could hear, or in inward voice only?

(15.) Verses 11-15.—In what sense, or how many senses, did the angel mean that Jesus was a savior?

(16.) Why were the citizens of heaven so greatly pleased, and exultant, over the birth of Jesus?

(17.) How far do you think heaven is from the earth, and do you think that those who are there know what is taking place here?

(18.) To what extent, as an accomplished fact, has the birth of Christ brought about peace and good will on the earth? (This question may be answered in writing by members of the club.)

(19.) Is it always safe for us to follow supernatural intimations, as these shepherds did? Give your reasons.

(20.) Verses 16-20.—When we start on a journey or commence a work, on the suggestion of the voice of God in our souls, do we invariably find the results as they were intimated, as these shepherds did?

(21.) Is jubilant joy the constant experience of those who live near enough to God to hear his voice, and are faithful enough to always obey? Give your reasons.

Lesson for Sunday, January 1, 1911.

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